

Regaining Our Health

A publication of the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Advisory Committee to Reduce Physical Inactivity by 10% by the year 2003

Physical inactivity in Newfoundland and Labrador is causing serious problems both for individuals and society. Health care costs are soaring, preventable illnesses are on the rise and there is a crisis of juvenile obesity. The citizens need to become more active.

Latest research by the Canadian Fitness & Life-styles Research Institute indicates as many as 67% of Newfoundland residents are insufficiently active, that is 2 out of 3 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are still not active enough for optimal health benefits. Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living calls for an hour of low-intensity activity everyday, or 30-60 minutes of moderate-intensity activity or 20-30 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity 4 to 7 days per week to stay healthy or improve your health.

The province of Newfoundland and Labrador, along with the Federal Government and the other provinces/territories, are committed to reducing the number of inactive citizens by 10% by the year 2003. But the government can not do this alone. There is a need for everyone to work together to reduce the incidence of inactivity and its negative consequences.



Newfoundland & Labrador Provincial Advisory Committee

Committee Stakeholders:
The committee is comprised of knowledgeable individuals, with expertise in the fields of: recreation and sport; fitness leaders; health and school educators; inclusion educators; physicians; professors; and government officials.

Goal:
"To decrease physical inactivity in Newfoundland and Labrador by 10% by the year 2003"

Objectives:
To encourage Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to become more physically active

To provide the opportunity for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to become more physically active

To create an environment for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to become more physically active

Key Findings

Cost of Inactivity

- Inactivity is responsible for 22% of coronary heart disease, 22% of colon cancer, 22% of osteoporosis related fractures, 12% of diabetes and hypertension, and 5% of breast cancer
- Inactive people die, on average, two years earlier than those who are more active
- Inactive children do not learn as well as those who are physically active, have lower self esteem, miss more school days, and are more likely to drop out
- One quarter of Canadian children are overweight and that proportion is increasing. The rate of obesity in children and youth has increased by 50% in the past 15 years
- Workplace absenteeism is costing Canadian employers \$12 billion a year
- The cost of obesity in Canada was estimated to be \$2 billion in 1999
- About \$2.1 billion, or 2.5% of the total direct health care costs in Canada, were attributed to physical inactivity in 1999

Benefits of Physical Activity:

- A 10% reduction in the prevalence of physical inactivity has the potential to reduce direct health care expenditure by \$150 million per year
- The risk of Breast Cancer is reduced by 40% if women exercise daily, especially later in life
- The most popular activities of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are walking (82%), yard work-gardening (64%), social dancing (60%), home exercise (42%), and swimming (30%).

Benefits of Being Active

Being active adds years to your life and life to your years

- ➔ It reduces your chances of coronary disease by 50%
- ➔ It helps control weight, reduces obesity and makes you feel better
- ➔ It reduces the probability of depression
- ➔ It helps improve productivity in industry, business, government, and education
- ➔ It reduces industrial accidents
- ➔ It helps people sleep better
- ➔ It strengthens bones and protects against osteoporosis
- ➔ It reduces your chances of developing breast and/or colon cancer

Who Benefits from Activity

★ Health care cost are reduced, benefitting health care corporation and the taxpayer

★ Education becomes more efficient, leading to better student performance and less disruption in the classroom

★ Business become more efficient as workers become more productive, benefitting both the employee and the bottom-line

★ Active youth are less involved with anti-social behaviours such as vandalism, and are less likely to be involved with the law-reducing law enforcement costs, and the very high costs of incarceration

SUCCESS STORIES

Arena of Hope - Good Move

Nothing has worked as well as putting a roof on the arena. "Since it opened, the gas sniffing rate has gone down tremendously," says Virginia Collins, executive director, Davis Inlet Band Council.

Physical Education

"I'm not knocking literacy. But what we know is kids who engage in physical education in the schools, when they go into the classroom, they get on to task more quickly, they work better, they have less absenteeism and they're less disruptive in their behaviour. That to me, sounds like a good recipe for improving math skills, literacy and everything else." Colin Higgs

Workplace Wellness

"Workplace wellness involves recognition that we spend most of our productive adult life in the workplace. Given that's the case, it's a tremendous opportunity to attempt to positively impact a person's lifestyle." Ed Buffett

Better Health, a step at a time

Whether as exercise or for relaxation, walking's benefits are clear - weight loss, reduced risk of heart disease, healthier bones, better sleep, greater strength and reduced anger, depression and anxiety.

Miracle Cure Found!!

What if there was a miracle pill that if you took it each day would give you less chance of getting obese, breast/colon cancer, heart disease, and would help you live longer and healthier into old age. How much would you pay for it?

Wouldn't you insist your children, parents, and loved ones take it, too?

The Miracle Cure: strap on your walking shoes for 60 minutes a day & you'll reap all of these health benefits

Current Trends & Statistics

Steps Taken By Newfoundlanders/Labradorians to Become More Active

- ✓ They Seek Information
55% read articles about physical activity
43% seek information from community/recreation centre
- ✓ They Attempt Physical Activities
71% make some active choices in their work routine
40% try to do some physical activity on a regular basis
- ✓ They Seek Advise
33% seek advise from family, friends, etc.
26% seek advise from a health care or recreation professional

What can you do?

- Log on to *Canada's Physical Activity Guide Website*: www.paguide.com for more information on how to implement a physical activity program into your daily schedule.
- Talk to your school about Quality Daily Physical Education for your kids, or contact your local recreation agency.
- For more information, contact the Provincial Advisory Committee on Reducing Physical Inactivity at 729-5281 or 729-3892.

Fall - 2001